

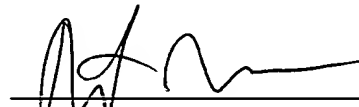
reduced to practice by filing an Italian patent application on December 10, 1997. Attached to the Declaration is an invention disclosure dated October 9, 1997, which includes a patent proposal from the inventor dated September 29, 1997 and several pages of notes dated between September 15-26, 1997. Also enclosed is an English translation of the invention disclosure pages that were originally written in Italian. The invention disclosure shows that the inventors were in possession of the invention prior to the effective date of Shishiguch and an application was diligently prepared and filed by the patent agent of the assignee. Therefore, Shishiguchi is not prior art, and all claims are in condition for allowance.

The applicants respectfully submit that all pending claims are allowable. The applicants, therefore, respectfully request the Examiner to consider this application in light of these remarks and the enclosed Declaration. If there are any remaining issues to be resolved, the applicants request that the Examiner contact the undersigned attorney for a telephone interview

Respectfully submitted,

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Enclosures:

Rule 131 Declaration (w/enclosures)

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